

Minutes of the Committee Meeting of the Shotley Peninsula Cycling Campaign

Held at The Church Room, Chelmondiston, on Wednesday 7th November 2018, at 6.30pm

Present: Cathy Crouch, Mike Crouch, Mike Havard, Rosie Kirkup, Jez Meredith, Karla Powell, Denise Tinker.

Also attending, by invitation: Clare Cadman, SCHP

1. Apologies:

Tony Gould, Sean Tinker, Sally Williams.

2. Southern Route:

Rosie Kirkup began by welcoming Clare Cadman to the meeting, and stated the SPCC's wish to continue to pursue the Southern Route, and to try to find a way forward after SCHP's decision not to put in a bid for funding to improve the existing bridleways.

Clare then explained SCHP's decision, pointing out various problems, such as the fact that this was wet woodland, and the damage that would be done to the roots of the trees lining the bridleway if the path were to be excavated prior to improving the surface, plus the need to cut back their branches. Cathy Crouch disputed that the wood is wet: it stands on light sandy soil. Other than a hollow where water collects, the existing unsurfaced path is both walkable and cyclable all the year round. The other wet areas (at the north-western and south-western edges of Cutlers Wood, and at Woodlands, Holbrook) are not within the SSSI.

CC and other committee members could not understand why the existing path would need to be excavated and then backfilled, when all that appears to be necessary is filling in the hollows with approved material. The proposed cutting back of the adjacent trees, which do not interfere with the use of the path, was also not understood.

Mike Crouch then asked if short sections of (plastic?) board walk might be another, less destructive, solution to the problem of the wet hollow. Clare agreed to speak to Martin Williamson about this. Clare also mentioned that the high-voltage electricity lines running parallel to the bridleway are to be under-grounded beyond the edge of the wood: RK wondered if a new path could be created here, as well, though clearly this would be very costly.

CC then suggested that the SPCC should seek the permission of the owner of the wood, and Natural England, to backfill the hollows in the manner that N.E. have already specified, and just see how well, or not, this works. David Wood could be approached to see if he would fund this from his Locality Budget. Clare did not object to this proposal.

Denise Tinker made the point that there are already three pupils who cycle to Holbrook High School from Ipswich, using the B1456 and B1080. It was agreed to ask DT (who had had to leave the meeting early) how many more children might use their bikes if there were a safe off-road route. It was also agreed that RK would contact the local Sustrans representative (now Philip Broadbent-Yale) as his predecessor, Anthony Wright, had been very interested in developing the Southern Route as one of Sustran's Regional Routes.

3. Community Path:

a) Freston Hill:

RK had spoken to Elizabeth Aldous (Chair of Freston Parish Meeting) about Freston putting in an application for the proposed new section of path up Freston Hill, thereby saving a bit of money; she was not keen to do this and felt there were problems for her parishioners at the layby. SPCC would therefore make the application itself.

RK had also met Martin Minta (retired arboriculturalist) on Freston Hill, to look at the existing vegetation (mainly elm suckers); he agreed that there was plenty of space for the proposed path, though there is a pinch point at the top of the hill, adjacent to Hill Cottage. The owner of this cottage, has, however, already indicated that he would be prepared to look at ways around the problem.

It was finally agreed that the next step was to get plans drawn up; Mike Havard agreed to ask his friend John Soames, if he would be willing to take on the job, and if so, how much he would charge.

b) Freston to Chelmondiston:

Nothing new to report.

c) Chelmondiston to Shotley:

Rosie Kirkup and Sally Williams had a meeting with Geoff Mayhew. He is now willing to consider allowing the footpath on his land, from New Covert to Warren Lane, to be licenced for use by cyclists, on a trial 5-year basis on the understanding that it would be at riders' own risk. When contact is re-established with Sustrans, this may be another project to ask for their help and advice with.

d) Shotley:

Nothing to report. Still no action on the Ganges site.

4. Accident on Freston Hill:

Following the recent accident, when a motorist hit a cyclist on Freston Hill, in broad daylight, Karla Powell had been concerned that accidents involving pedal cycles were not counted separately by the police. However, Mike Crouch was pretty sure that these could be found on line, having looked himself in the past. KP agreed to do some research.

5. Lost paths:

Cathy Crouch wished to raise the issue of historic roads and paths that have fallen out of use, and not been registered as public rights of way. If they are not proved to be old rights of way and registered as such by 2026, then there can be no further opportunity to reopen them. It is therefore crucial that research is done to check that no such roads or paths have been missed.

CC agreed to do a short news-letter about this, to be circulated to all our members, as the more people researching this issue the better.

6. Shotley Peninsula Tourism Action Group

RK has stopped attending these meetings as they are of very little relevance to SPCC. She still receives Minutes of meetings.

7. Publicity and Communications:

a) Website: up to date.

b) Newsletter: CC will prepare one, to include Lost Paths, and also to ask members to report any cycle accidents or near misses they have experienced or witnessed.

c) In Touch magazine: Nothing to report to them.

d) Shawn's Shorts: No new information to report.

8. Treasurers report:

Nothing to report.

9. Membership:

Membership has risen from 126 to 131.

DT left the meeting before any feedback could be given about Holbrook High School re-joining as a group member, or what success she may have had with the local primary schools.

10. Minutes of the previous meeting (3.9.18):

These were signed as a true record.

11. Matters arising:

a) Future events: Jez Meredith had had a couple of ideas about events to raise the SPCC`s profile: firstly, he has access to the Smoothy Bike, which recycles as you cycle! He also suggested getting someone, such as the Bike Doctor, along to an event to do, or demonstrate, some basic bike maintenance.

Karla Powell had previously suggested a bicycle treasure hunt could be considered.

It was then suggested that such an event could be tacked onto another event such as a school or village fete.

RK asked for an item about future events to be put on the next agenda.

b) Sally Chicken: RK had not managed to make contact with Sally Chicken, our local Co-operative Board member, but Karla Powell, now a Co-op board member, agreed to make contact with them on our behalf.

12. AOB:

Tony Gould had drawn the attention of the committee to a proposal to develop land at the top of the hill at Wherstead as a Service Station and lorry park. RK and KP had attended a meeting at Wherstead to find out more. If this proposal were to go ahead, it could make crossing the slip roads even more problematic for cyclists and pedestrians.

The SPCC will consider making an appropriate response to the likely planning application.

Date of next meeting: 6.00pm on Wednesday 16th January 2019, at Broadacres, Chelmondiston.